



Circular Letter SNA 15/05

To: The Management Authorities of Primary Schools

Contract of Employment for Special Needs Assistants

I am directed by the Minister for Education and Science to inform you that following discussions at national level, revised arrangements have now been agreed regarding the terms and conditions of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) at primary level.

In that regard please find attached a revised contract of employment which should be offered to every Special Needs Assistant employed by your school and whose post is funded by the Department of Education and Science. Further copies of the contract can be downloaded from this Department's Website at www.education.ie under Education Personnel/Special Needs Assistants. The original signed contract should be retained in the school by the managerial authority, and a copy given to the Special Needs Assistant.

New Appointments

The revised contract has regard to the fact that all newly approved Special Needs Assistant posts are related to the special needs of one or more pupils in respect of whom the posts are sanctioned, and may be utilised by the school having regard to the needs of those pupils and the duties of the post. **The practice of issuing child specific contracts should cease with immediate effect.**

Existing Staff

Special Needs Assistants already in service on child specific contracts and whose employment is continuing for the next school year should be offered the option of transferring to the revised contract or remaining on their existing contract. **The option of transferring to the revised contract is a once-off option and must be exercised on or before 30th September 2005.** Those Special Needs Assistants who exercise the option of transferring to the revised contract will have their approved service as a Special Needs Assistant in the school reckoned for seniority purposes. Those Special Needs Assistants who do not exercise the option on or before 30th September 2005 will remain on their child specific contract and their future employment will continue to be dependent on the assessed needs of the child specified in the contract.

Review of allocation

The allocation of special needs assistant posts to your school will be reviewed on an annual basis. The employment of Special Needs Assistants may be reduced from full-time to part-time or terminated by way of redundancy where the allocation is reduced. The selection criteria for redundancy will be on a last-in first out (LIFO) basis in accordance with the agreement reached with the representatives of the grade concerned subject to the contractual arrangements already in place in the school. This means that, in the case of redundancy, unless the most junior SNA in the school has a written child specific contract that entitles her/him to remain in the school, her/his contract should be terminated on the basis that she/he is the most junior SNA in the school in terms of length of service.

Management authorities are requested to ensure that this circular letter is brought to the attention of all Special Needs Assistants including those on maternity leave, sick leave, etc.

P. Maloney,
Principal Officer.
August 2005.

[Contract of Employment Form](#)